

Duxbury Clipper

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Summer Means Business, Weather or Not

By KEITH L. MARTIN

With Labor Day come and gone and a new school year under way, summer – whether we like it or not – is officially over.

But what started out as a soggy May and damp June is ending with good weather and good sales for area merchants.

"I think the consensus [from businesses] has been that it was a fairly good summer," said Donna Wood, President of the Duxbury Business Association. "I don't think the weather was a negative for retail businesses

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Denise Johnson and Bonnie Tewksbury of Cottons stand in the store's renovated doorway, which has attracted new customers.

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because people were not at the beach, so overall it was a good summer."

Wood recalls one day this summer she was shopping in The Studio at Duxbury Marketplace and the atmosphere was like Christmas.

"They were mobbed like it was the holidays and were gift wrapping like crazy," she said. "I'm sure it was like that in other stores as well. Once inspiration to shop happens, it seems to happen at one time."

The Studio owner John Stanton confirmed Wood's suspicions saying business this summer was very good at his store. He attributed good sales to a particularly good year for weddings coinciding with his shop's registry and gift services.

Among the top items at The Studio this summer were Vera Bradley Designs, Simon Pearce glassware and Mariposa metalware, said Stanton.



John Stanton and Eleanor Drew of The Studio, where a busy wedding season has meant steady sales.

While summer is gone, Stanton foresees a good fall in The Studio's future.



Rick Lawson of Sportworks strings a tennis racket for one of many customers coming back to the sport this summer.

Across from The Studio, Anne Henning Photography had a good summer, but not as good as a year ago said proprietor Anne Henning. In June, the store experienced its best business for gift giving.

"In mid to late June, we had strong sales," she said. "People were here for high school graduation and a lot came in for photography books and photos of Duxbury especially."

At Cottons in Hall's Corner, the new look of the front of the store attracted new customers, said owner Denise Johnson.

"Summer business was excellent," she said. "We had a lot of tourists and the new renovations brought people by our store. We've seen a lot of new faces and gotten a lot of feedback from people who like the new front of the store."

When shoppers weren't inside shopping, they were out enjoying what became a better summer weather as the months passed. Rick Lawson at Sportworks Ltd. has seen an increase in tennis equipment in recent months given the improved skies outside

and the influence of more tournaments on television.

"We've seen a lot of people come back to tennis that haven't played in years," said Lawson. "With tee times more expensive these days, people are coming back to the sport and seeing it provides more exercise than golf as well."

Lawson also noted an increase in the sale of lacrosse equipment as many children from Duxbury and other towns have developed an interest in the sport.

Jack Kent, Jr. at Bayside Marine Corp. said his business had a good summer financially, even though they were slightly behind sales from last year.

Kent attributed his good summer to "quality customers" and the fact his business has products high in value, a fact people recognize. He even expects his good fortune to continue into fall as the marina will store boats to capacity for another year.

Many Duxbury residents were also stopping into Westwinds Bookshop to pick up some summer reading, according to owner Cissy Greenbaum. The season began well thanks to the arrival of the latest Harry Potter book and release party held at the bookstore.

Also flying off the shelves this summer, said Greenbaum, were *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd, *The DaVinci Code* by Dan Brown and *The Big House* by George Howe Colt, bringing lots of consumers to Westwinds to buy these new releases.

"I feel like the economy is trending up again versus where we were in winter and spring," said Greenbaum.

Across the street at Video Scene, lots of people stopped in for the summer's hottest movies, said manager Peter Moraites. Since July, the five movies people have checked out most have been: *How To Lose a Guy in Ten Days*, *Gangs of New York*, *Bringing Down the House*, *Phone Booth* and *The Life of David Gale*.

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Moraites said that the up and down weather this summer has had an interesting affect on business at the store.

"Bad weather helps [sales], but heat helps too," he said. "With the most recent string of hot weather, no one wanted to be outside, so we were very busy."

The dog days of August also aided numerous food and beverage businesses as people got out of their kitchens and stopped in to many local merchants.

Carole and Joe Carroll, owners of Duxbury Wine and Spirits, said that with the nice weather this month has helped sales as many people head to the beach. According to Carole, many customers are picking up wine from Australia, Italy and Spain as summer draws to a close.

"People like niche wine – it's something different and we are always on alert for it," she said.

Many customers discovered D'Orazios Italian Marketplace this summer as well. The store experienced its first summer in Duxbury, and according to co-owner Christen Allocca, the eatery continues to get a warm reception by local customers.

"We have a really loyal customer following and since the weather has turned [nicer], we have a lot more people coming in," she said.

In addition to Boar's Head deli meats, many customers



A weather-friendly August has made for good business at Farfar's Danish Ice Cream Shop.

invested in prepared dinners and sandwiches from the restaurant, said Allocca and coming soon they can stick around to enjoy it.

"We're planning to add seating in the [vacant] store next door so I'm optimistic that for the fall and winter, with the new seating, we'll do a good business in hot dinners and sandwiches," she said.

Even Farfar's got more customers for that staple of summer – ice cream – thanks to increased exposure as one of the "Best in Boston" according to Boston Magazine.

"People from the city came and we knew they had read the magazine because of the questions they asked or sometimes they told us they had read the article," said owner Andra Carleton. "Especially in the summer, with people traveling, they ventured out of their way to

come here and it has been wonderful."

Carleton added that the flavors customers ordered most this summer were vanilla, Oreo and chocolate. The shop experienced its best ever July 5 and as summer draws to a close, she is optimistic that business will continue to be good but recognizes Mother Nature plays a big role.

"As long as the weather holds [after Labor Day], we'll be fine," she said. "After mid-September, weather plays more of a role in our business."

Overall, the DBA's Wood sees good days on the horizon's for all of Duxbury's businesses.

"I think people have some disposable income and combined with some receiving tax checks, we'll see a strong retail period over the next few months," she said.

Business and Industry